




**IN THE HIGH COURT OF SOUTH AFRICA
GAUTENG DIVISION, JOHANNESBURG**

CASE NO: 133253/2023

- (1) REPORTABLE: NO
- (2) OF INTEREST TO OTHER JUDGES: NO
- (3) REVISED.

15 December 2025

.....
Date


.....
ML TWALA

In the matter between:

ENVER MOHAMED MOTALA

APPLICANT

And

CHIEF MASTER OF THE HIGH COURTS

RESPONDENT

JUDGMENT

TWALA J

Introduction

- [1] This is an application by Mr Enver Mohamed Motala, the applicant, wherein he seeks an order against the respondent, the Chief Master of the High Courts, in the following terms:
- 1.1 The respondent is ordered within 15 days of the date of judgment to take all steps necessary to enrol the applicant on the National List of Insolvency Practitioners,
- 1.2 costs in the event of opposition.
- [2] The application is opposed by the respondent who has filed a substantial answering affidavit. I propose to refer to the parties as applicant and respondent or Chief Master in this judgment.

Preliminaries

- [3] At the commencement of the hearing of this case, the applicant sought leave to file a supplementary affidavit which had already been served on the respondent. The applicant indicated to the court that this application in terms of Rule 6(5)(e) must be dealt with first to allow and admit the further affidavit to the main application.
- [4] It was submitted by counsel for the applicant that there existed exceptional circumstances which necessitate further filing of the further or supplementary affidavit. Counsel further submitted that the application in terms of Rule 6(5)(e) was served on the respondent more than a month before the hearing and therefore there is no prejudice meted against the respondent for it had ample time to file a further answering affidavit.

- [5] It is necessary to file the further affidavit, so the argument went, for it contains facts which are relevant to the determination of the issues in this case which facts only came to the knowledge of the applicant on 14 October 2025, after the replying has already been filed. Such facts are that the deponent to the answering affidavit, Ms Roberts, has been convicted of the offence of perjury regarding her signature in one of the letters she addressed to the applicant in this case. She alleged under oath that the signature on the letter was not her signature, and it was forged but later conceded that it was her signature – thus she was convicted of the offence of perjury.
- [6] Although the respondent intimated that it was opposed to the filing of a supplementary affidavit, it did not file any answering affidavit in opposition because, so it was submitted, it could not secure a consultation with the relevant person who is the deponent of the main answering affidavit in this case. The deponent having left the employ of the Master's office. However, the respondent did not dispute that the deponent to the answering affidavit was convicted of the offence of perjury arising out of her handling of this case.
- [7] It is trite and in the interest of the administration of justice that the well – known and well - established general rules regarding the number of sets and the proper sequence of filing of affidavits in motion proceedings should ordinarily be observed. However, it does not mean that the general rule must be rigidly applied. Where it is demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist and good cause is shown and that no prejudice would be caused upon the opposing party, the court, in the exercise of its discretion, may permit the filing of further affidavits.
- [8] Rule 6(5)(e) of the Uniform Rules of Court provides as follows:
- “(1) Every application must be brought on notice of motion supported by an affidavit as to the facts upon which the application relies on for relief.
 - (2) ...
 - (3) ...

(4) ...

(5)(d) Any person opposing the grant of an order sought in the Notice of Motion shall –

(i) ...

(ii) Within fifteen (15) days of notifying the applicant of his intention to oppose the application, deliver his answering affidavit, if any, together with the relevant documents; and

(iii) ...

(e) within ten (10) days of the service upon him of the affidavit and documents referred to in subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (d) of subrule (5), the applicant may deliver a replying affidavit. The Court may, in its discretion permit filing of further affidavits.”

[9] In *Hano Trading CC v J R 209 Investments (Pty) Ltd*¹ the Supreme Court of Appeal stated the following:

“A litigant in civil proceedings has the option of approaching a court for relief on application as opposed to an action. Should a litigant decide to proceed by way of application, rule 6 of the Uniform Rules of Court applies. This rule sets out the sequence and timing for the filing of the affidavits by the respective parties. An advantage inherent to application proceedings, even if opposed, is that it can lead to a speedy and efficient adjudication and resolution of the disputes between parties. Unlike actions, in application proceedings the affidavits take the place not only of the pleadings, but also of the essential evidence which would be led at a trial. It is accepted that the affidavits are limited to three sets.¹ It follows thus that great care must be taken to fully set out the case of a party on whose behalf an affidavit is filed. It is therefore not surprising that the rule 6(5)(e) provides that further affidavits may only be allowed at the discretion of the court.²

Rule 6(5)(e) establishes clearly that the filing of further affidavits is only permitted with the indulgence of the court. A court, as arbiter, has the sole discretion whether to allow the affidavits or not. A court will only exercise its discretion in this regard where there is good reason for doing so.”³

¹ (650/11) [2012] ZASCA 127; 2013 (1) SA 161 (SCA)

² Para 10

³ Para 11

[10] It is not in dispute that the applicant only became aware of the plea-bargaining process and the conviction of perjury of the deponent to the answering affidavit on 14 October 2025, almost six months after the replying affidavit was filed. Further, it is undisputed that the application for filing a further affidavit was served on the respondent more than a month before the hearing of this case. Furthermore, no case was advanced by the respondent that the filing of the further affidavit will be prejudicial to its case.

[11] It is my considered view therefore that the supplementary affidavit the applicant seeks to file is relevant to these proceedings since it discloses facts that would ordinarily not have come to the attention of the court which facts have a direct impact on the credibility of the deponent to the answering affidavit of the respondent. Furthermore, the respondent has not shown that it will be prejudiced by the admission of the supplementary affidavit. I hold the view therefore that the applicant has made out a case for the admission of the supplementary affidavit and it is allowed to file same.

Factual Background

[12] The facts foundational to this case are undisputed and are the following: On 5 September 2011 the applicant was removed from the Panel of Insolvency Practitioners by the Master of the High Court, Pretoria due to conduct which was inconsistent with the conduct expected of a liquidator or trustee. On 20 November 2019 the applicant applied to the office of the Acting Chief Master for a decision that he was not disqualified for appointment as a liquidator or trustee and to recognise him as eligible for future appointments as a liquidator or trustee.

[13] The Acting Chief Master at the time advised the applicant that his application will be referred to the Steering Committee for a decision. In about September 2021 a new Acting Chief Master was appointed and on 19 November 2021 the new Acting Chief Master advised the applicant that his application would be referred to the Insolvency

Working Group (*“the IWG”*) for a decision. On 1 June 2022 the applicant received a pile of documents from a ‘whistle blower’ which contained amongst others a document titled ‘Internal Memorandum’ dated 11 March 2022.

- [14] According to the internal memorandum of 11 March 2022, the IWG met on 15 February 2022, considered the applicant’s application and resolved that the applicant be re-instated on the National List of Insolvency Practitioners(*“National List”*) on condition that he submits a renewal affidavit at the next date for new intakes which openings will be from 1 April 2022 to 30 April 2022 and that he be provided with an outcome by no later than 31 May 2022. The resolution of the IWG was communicated to the Acting Chief Master who did not approve of the resolution and recommendations of the IWG – hence this application.

Submission of the Parties

- [15] It is submitted by counsel for the applicant that the applicant’s application served before the committee of the Masters (IWG) which is tasked with the consideration and determination of applicants who are suitably qualified for appointment into the National List. Although it took more than two years for the IWG to reach a decision, so it was argued, on 15 February 2022 the IWG resolved that the applicant met all the requirements and should be reinstated in the National List.
- [16] It was further contended by counsel for the applicant that the decision of the IWG, which is the only authoritative body capable of making a decision regarding the qualification of a person to be a liquidator or trustee, is final as it was also confirmed by the Chairperson of the IWG in her correspondence to the respondent dated 19 July 2022. The duty of the Acting Chief Master was only to implement the decision of the IWG by reinstating or placing the applicant on the National List. Once the IWG has made a decision, so the argument went, it is final for the IWG is the only authoritative body which comprises of Masters and is tasked to deal with the

appointment of liquidators and trustees on the National List. The Acting Chief Master was bound and obliged to implement its decision.

- [17] It was contended further by counsel for the applicant that the evidence of the respondent in its answering affidavit flatly contradicts all that has been said by the deponent in her correspondence with the applicant in that the decision of the IWG is final and should be implemented by the Acting Chief Master. Because the deponent in the answering affidavit now contradicts herself and say the IWG's decision is not final but subject to the Acting Chief Master's approval, so it was argued, the answering affidavit of the respondent should be discarded for there is no explanation why she is now making a complete about turn on what she communicated to the applicant.
- [18] The powers for the appointment of liquidators and trustees of insolvent estates are conferred upon the Master by the Companies Act⁴ and the Insolvency Act⁵, so the argument went, and the empowering provisions do not refer to the Chief Master who is the executive officer of the various Masters, Deputy Master and Assistant Masters with powers to control, direct and supervise. The Chief Master does not have any of the statutory powers accorded to the Masters by the Companies Act and the Insolvency Act.
- [19] A practice directive of the Chief Master, so it was contended, does not give the Chief Master the power to make the final decision in the appointment or qualification of an insolvency practitioner. The Chief Master has no power to determine the appointment of liquidators and trustees since that power lies with the IWG as the authoritative body nor does the decision of the IWG require the approval of the Chief Master. A practise directive cannot trump the legislation it is founded upon.

⁴ 61 of 1973

⁵ 24 of 1936

- [20] The deponent to the answering affidavit is plainly dishonest and her evidence cannot be believed. She has demonstrated her dishonesty when she perjured herself in alleging that her signature to correspondence in this case was forged but later pleaded guilty to the offence of perjury and was convicted as such. It is contended therefore that her evidence should not be believed and that her affidavit should be discarded.
- [21] Raising the issue that the applicant has a previous conviction of fraud and theft does not assist the case of the respondent, so it was contended, for such a conviction has been expunged and does not exist anymore. It does not lie in the mouth of the respondent that the applicant is bound by the decision of the Supreme Court of Appeal in *Motala v The Master of the North Gauteng High Court*⁶ and until it is set aside the applicant cannot approach the Chief Master to enrol him in the National List.
- [22] In sum, the respondent contended that the decision of the IWG is not final but subject to the approval of the Chief Master. The decision of the IWG is a recommendation which is forwarded to the Chief Master for approval. The Chief Master was not satisfied with the decision of the IWG for the reasons that the IWG did not consider the provisions of section 372 of the companies act, that the applicant was never part of the National List nor did the IWG consider the decision of the Supreme Court of Appeal in the Motala case referred to above
- [23] The applicant is bound by the decision of the Supreme Court of Appeal which found that the applicant was initially improperly placed on the roll of Insolvency Practitioners when he did not meet the requirements of section 372 of the companies act in that he was previously convicted of theft and fraud. Before applying to be reinstated, so the argument went, the applicant must first apply to court to have the Supreme Court of Appeal judgment set aside.

⁶ (92/2018) [2019] ZASCA 60 (17 MAY 2019)

Legal Framework

[24] It is now opportune to mention the relevant provisions of The Administration of Estates Act⁷ (“*the Act*”) which provides as follows:

“1. Definitions

‘Master’ in relation to any matter, property or estate, means the Master, Deputy Master or Assistant Master of a High Court appointed under section 2, who has jurisdiction in respect of that matter, property or estate and who is subject to the control, direction and supervision of the Chief Master.

2. Appointment of Masters, Deputy Masters and Assistant Masters

(1) (a) Subject to subsection (2) and the laws governing the public service, the Minister-

- (i) shall appoint a Chief Master of the High Courts;
- (ii) shall, in respect of the area of jurisdiction of each High Court, appoint a Master of the High Court; and
- (iii) may, in respect of each such area, appoint one or more Deputy Masters of the High Court and one or more Assistant Masters of the High Court, who may, subject to the control, direction and supervision of the Master, do anything which may lawfully be done by the Master.

(b) The Chief Master-

- (i) is subject to the control, direction and supervision of the Minister;
- (ii) is the executive officer of the Masters' offices; and
- (iii) shall exercise control, direction and supervision over all the Masters.

⁷ 66 of 1965

[25] The Judicial Matters Amendment Act⁸ provides the following regarding the Chief Master:

“Insertion of section 96A in Act 66 of 1965

8. The following section is hereby inserted after section 96 of the Administration of Estates Act, 1965:

Powers, duties and functions of Chief Master

96A. The Chief Master, as the head of the Offices of the Master of the High Court, shall have authority over the exercise of all powers, and the performance of all the duties and functions, conferred or imposed on or assigned to any Master by this Act or any other law.”

[26] It is convenient at this stage to restate certain paragraphs of the ‘internal memo’ titled INSOLVENCY WORKING GROUP RESOLUTIONS⁹ which are relevant for the discussion that will follow which state the following:

“1. Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the office of the Chief Master with resolutions taken by the Insolvency Working Group Resolutions following a meeting which took place on 15th February 2022 at the Master’s office in Pretoria, in respect of the request to conduct a physical meeting as approved by the Chief Master.

2. Background

2.1 The meeting was attended by Ms Robers, Ms Agulhas as well as Mr du Plessis. It is submitted that at the time of the preparation of this memo, the panel members formed a quorum and have considered the issues which are discussed in this memo.

2.2 ...

Resolution

2.3.1 ...

⁸ 15 of 2023

⁹ 11 March 2022

- 2.3.2 Mr Motala's request to be reinstated to the National Panel of Liquidators:
 - 2.3.2.1. ...
 - 2.3.2.2 ...
 - 2.3.2.8. It has been resolved that Mr Motala be re-instated on the National Panel of Liquidators on condition that he submits a renewal affidavit at the next date for new intakes which openings will be from 1 April 2022 to 30 April 2022. Mr Motala will be provided with an outcome by no later than 31 May 2022."

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 it is recommended that the Chief Master give effect to the recommendations of the working group by granting approval as follows:
 - 3.1.1 ...
 - 3.1.4 That Mr Motala be re-instated on the National Panel of Liquidators on condition that he submits a renewal affidavit at the next date for new intakes which openings will be from 1 April 2022 to 30 April 2022. Mr Motala be provided with an outcome by no later than 31 May 2022."¹⁰

Discussion

[27] The issue for determination in this case is crisp and is whether the decision of the IWG is final and binding on the Chief Master, or whether it is merely a recommendation which requires the approval of the Chief Master.

[28] It is undisputed that the IWG is a committee established by the Chief Master and is comprised of three Masters of the High Court with a Chairperson at its helm. Its duties include, among others, the consideration of applications and determination of the suitability of applicants to be appointed as liquidators and trustees, as well as recommending the suitably qualified applicants to the Chief Master for enrolment on the National List.

¹⁰ Note that at the bottom of each recommendation are the words 'Approved/Not Approved and comments'

- [29] In terms of the act, Masters of the High Courts are subject to the control, direction and supervision of the Chief Master and the Chief Master is subject to the control, direction and supervision of the Minister. Put in another way, a Master of the High Court has no authority over the Chief Master for he is subject to the control, direction and supervision of the Chief Master. The Chief Master is the executive and, accounting officer of the Master's Office as a department in the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, and all the Masters of the High Courts are accountable to him. The decision of the Chief Master is an administrative action since he performs a public function in terms of the legislation.
- [30] I am alive to the fact that the deponent to the answering affidavit was convicted of the offence of perjury in relation to her correspondence addressed to the applicant in this case. However, it would be an absurdity to discard the whole of the evidence in her answering affidavit because of the perjury conviction. There is no evidence before the Court why in the first place she wrote the letter to the applicant and postulated that the decision of the committee, the IWG, she was chairing is final when the legislation clearly provides that the Masters of the High Courts are subject to the control, direction and supervision of the Chief Master.
- [31] The letter that the deponent denounced to have written and signed suggests that the decision of the IWG, that the applicant is no longer disqualified from taking appointments as a liquidator or trustee, is final and will be implemented in due course. However, in the answering affidavit the deponent makes a complete about turn and say the decision of the IWG is a recommendation to the Chief Master who has the power to approve or disapprove the resolutions and recommendations of the IWG.
- [32] As much as the deponent was convicted of the offence of perjury in relation to the letter she wrote to the applicant, it does not mean whatever she testifies about in this case should not be believed. Her testimony that the decision of the IWG is not final but is just a recommendation which is subject to the decision of the Chief Master is

correct and is in line with the act which provides that the Masters of the High Courts are subject to the control, direction and supervision of the Chief Master. The letter to the applicant from the chairperson of the IWG cannot be regarded as publication of the decision of Chief Master for it was published by the Chairperson of the IWG without the Chief Master's authority.

[33] In *De Wet and Another v Khammissa and Others*¹¹ the Supreme Court of Appeal stated the following:

“Back to the merits of the appeal. In this Court, counsel for the appellants fairly accepted the correctness of the views expressed in paras 11 and 12 above, and that the case turns on the legality of the second decision. I now turn to that decision. The respondents contend that the Master became *functus officio* after making the first decision, and that she was not empowered to revoke it and replace it with the second decision. Broadly stated, *functus officio* is a doctrine in terms of which decisions of officials are deemed to be final and binding once they are made. Thus, the question as to whether the Master was *functus officio*, calls for a consideration whether the first decision was final. Hoexter explains that finality is a point arrived at when the decision is published, announced or otherwise conveyed to those affected by it, ie it must have passed into the public domain in some manner.”¹²

[34] It should be recalled that the applicant testified in his founding papers that he had received no communication from the Chief Master regarding the outcome of his application until he was given a pile of documents by one shady character, a Mr Aggrizy, in which pile of documents he found a copy of the internal memo and correspondence between the IWG Chairperson and the Acting Chief Master about his application. This confirms that the decision and recommendations of the IWG were not communicated to the applicant nor were they made public by the office of the Chief Master – thus, the decision and the recommendations were not final but were still subject to the decision of the Chief Master.

¹¹ (358/2020) [2021] ZASCA 7 (4 June 2021)

¹² Para 15

[35] In terms of the act the line of authority in the Master's Office as a department in the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development flows from the Chief Master as the executive or accounting officer and then the Masters of the High Courts. It is disingenuous to suggest that a decision of a committee of the IWG status appointed by the Chief Master to assist him in the execution of his administrative functions would trump or override the decision of the Chief Master. It cannot be right that the Chief Master's role in this case was merely to implement the decision and recommendations of the IWG and enrol the applicant on the National List. By establishing the IWG, it cannot be said that the Chief Master has abdicated his responsibility in the appointment of insolvency practitioners onto the National List.

[36] In *President of the Republic of South Africa and Others v South African Ruby Football Union and Others*¹³ the Constitutional Court stated the following:

“In law, the appointment of a commission only takes place when the President's decision is translated into an overt act, through public notification. In addition, the Constitution requires decisions by the President which will have legal effect to be in writing. Section 84(2)(f) does not prescribe the mode of public notification in the case of the appointment of a commission of inquiry, but the method usually employed, as in the present case, is by way of promulgation in the *Government Gazette*. The President would have been entitled to change his mind at any time prior to the promulgation of the notice and nothing which he might have said to the Minister could have deprived him of that power. Consequently, the question whether such appointment is valid, is to be adjudicated as at the time when the act takes place, namely at the time of promulgation. This the Judge failed to do. He erred, not only in treating the press statement as proof of an abdication of authority, but also in holding that the abdication, which he found as a matter of fact to have taken place, was irrevocable.¹⁴

In *Administrator, Cape v Associated Buildings Ltd*, the Appellate Division had to consider an argument that a power vested by a provincial ordinance in the administrator acting with the consent of the executive committee of the province, had been wrongly delegated to the

¹³ (CCT16/98) [1999] ZACC 11; 2000 (1) SA 1; 1999 (10) BCLR 1059 (10 September 1999)

¹⁴ Para 44

provincial secretary, and could not thereafter be exercised by the administrator in accordance with the requirements of the Ordinance. It dealt with that argument as follows:

“In any event, whether there had been an effective delegation or not, there can be no question of the competency of the authority – the Administrator acting with the consent of the Executive Committee – that dealt with the matter on the 14 November 1955. That was the occasion when the decision was taken which was communicated to the respondent’s attorneys by the letter of the 17 November. I do not agree with the statement in the judgment of the Court *a quo* that:

‘having delegated his authority to the Provincial Secretary and the latter official or somebody to whom he had delegated his powers having completed the matter delegated to him, the Administrator could not thereafter handle the matter himself.’

The delegation was obviously not intended to be an irrevocable one or one that would divest the Administrator of the power of acting himself, nor can I conceive of any principle which could have given it that effect.”

In that case there had been a purported delegation of power to the provincial secretary prior to the exercise of the power by the administrator. Because the purported delegation was invalid, it could have no legal effect and could not preclude the administrator from subsequently exercising the power conferred upon him. The same holds true in this case. Even if, as a matter of fact, there had been an improper abdication by the President to the Minister on 5 August 1997, such abdication would have had no legal effect. It would have been a nullity, and as such, could never have been irrevocable. Like the administrator in the *Associated Buildings* case, the President would have retained the capacity to exercise the powers conferred upon him by the Constitution and the Commissions Act.”¹⁵

- [37] There is no doubt in my mind that the decision of the IWG in this case was a recommendation to the Chief Master, who is vested with the ultimate authority in the appointment and enrolment of insolvency practitioners on the National List, that the applicant no longer be disqualified to take appointment as liquidator or trustee and that his name be placed on the National List. A recommendation is subject to the approval or disapproval of the person or authority it is given to. As indicated above, each and every recommendation made in the IWG document has a provision

¹⁵ Para 45

at the bottom thereof for approval or disapproval by the Chief Master and with regard to the applicant, the Chief Master disapproved the recommendation and furnished his reasons therefor.

- [38] Even if the answering affidavit were to be completely discarded from the record as suggested by the applicant, I do not agree with the contentions of the applicant that the submission of the resolutions of the IWG and its recommendations to the Chief Master is only a formality and does not require the Chief Master's approval. This is so because the document itself, titled Internal Memo, provides at the foot of every recommendation for the approval or disapproval of the recommendation and for the comments if not approved. I hold the view therefore that the only reason why the decision and resolutions of the IWG are submitted to the Chief Master, is because the IWG is accountable to the Chief Master for it is subject to his (the Chief Master) authority, control, direction and supervision.

Conclusion

- [39] The unavoidable conclusion is therefore that the IWG decisions are subject to approval by the Chief Master who performs a public function in terms of the act. The refusal of the Chief Master to approve the recommendation to list the applicant on the National List is a decision taken by the Chief Master in the performance of a public function. The decisions of the IWG are just recommendations and are not final since they are internal decisions and recommendations by a committee appointed by the Chief Master which still require final consideration of the Chief Master, as the ultimate statutory authority, before they could be implemented.
- [40] The Chief Master, as the statutory head of the Master's Office, does not only rubber stamp decisions of the IWG but has the power to consider them and refuse or allow their implementation. The decisions of the IWG cannot trump or override the decision of the Chief Master – thus the final decision lies with the Chief Master who performs a public function in terms of legislation. It is therefore not open to the

applicant to demand that the Chief Master implement the decision and or recommendation of the IWG.


[41] The ineluctable conclusion is therefore that the Chief Master made a decision not to approve the recommendations of the IWG to enrol the applicant on the National List and in terms of the Oudekraal principle¹⁶ that decision remains valid and binding until it is formally set aside by a court. I do not understand the applicant to be seeking to review the decision of the Chief Master refusing to enrol the applicant on the National List, but the applicant sought an order compelling the Chief Master to execute the decision of the IWG. I hold the view therefore that the applicant has failed to prove its case against the respondent and the application falls to be dismissed.

Costs

[42] The general rule is that the costs follow the result of the hearing, and I have no reason to deviate from that rule in this case. There were no issues in this case which implicated the Constitution and therefore I can find no reason to engage the Biowatch principle.¹⁷

[43] In the result, the following order is made:

1. The supplementary affidavit of the applicant is admitted into evidence,
2. The main application is dismissed with costs on the party and party scale A.



TWALA M L
JUDGE OF THE HIGH COURT OF SOUTH AFRICA
GAUTENG DIVISION, JOHANNESBURG

¹⁶ Oudekraal Estates (Pty) Ltd v City of Cape Town & Others [2004] (6) SA 222 (SCA)

¹⁷ Biowatch Trust v Registrar Genetic Resources & Others 2009 (10) BCLR 1014 (CC)

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Date of Hearing: 24 November 2025

Date of Judgment: 15 December 20252025

Delivered: This judgment and order was prepared and authored by the Judge whose name is reflected and is handed down electronically by circulation to Parties / their legal representatives by email and by uploading it to the electronic file of this matter on Case Lines. The date of the order is deemed to be 15 December 2025.